



February 25, 2020

To SUNY Poly Faculty, Staff, and Students,

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are bedrock SUNY Poly values. As we look at incidents that have occurred here and across the United States, I want to make it clear that SUNY Poly is committed to increasing awareness and creating positive change in these core areas. To that end, I am thrilled to share with you the great strides that *You Belong at SUNY Poly*, a team of faculty, staff, and students volunteers, has begun to make since its January launch.

The New Year kicked off with a series of LGBTQ+ 101 trainings hosted by You Belong for faculty and staff. To date, 92 faculty and staff across both campuses have completed the training, which offered participants the opportunity to gain a greater understanding about the history of the LGBTQ+ community and the equal rights movement, as well as the terminology used to express gender identity, sex, gender expression, and sexual orientation, in addition to an exploration of some of the struggles faced by those in the LGBTQ+ community. These important workshops also fostered an environment for participants to identify ways to make SUNY Poly classrooms and campus offices as inclusive as possible.

*Choose a Different Word*, a tabling program, provided a unique opportunity to develop a deeper understanding about how commonly used words, phrases, and terminologies can be offensive and exclusive to certain individuals. As part of the solution, for example, participants learned how simple—but meaningful—changes in delivery can make the world a more tolerant place for everyone.

This month, more than 100 student club leaders were trained through the SGU DEI committee and You Belong on topics including identities, cultural competencies, and creating inclusive programs & events. Additional sessions will be held in March to ensure all club executive members are trained.

In the meantime, I would like to make you aware of a number of events this week that I encourage you to attend. There will be a grand opening of the Black Museum of Excellence (sponsored by Residential Life) today in the Gannett Gallery (Utica Campus) beginning at 4 p.m. At 6 p.m., the program, "Why We Celebrate Black History Month," will be offered for a second time at Utica's Student Center MPR. The Black Museum of Excellence is also available for view at the Albany Campus in the NanoFab South rotunda throughout this week.

March programming includes sessions with Phyllis A.H. Breland, Hamilton College's Director of Opportunity Program. "Working Through the Uncomfortable" will be held on March 31 in G172 Donovan Hall at noon for students and 3 p.m. for faculty and staff. Trans Awareness and Mental Health Tabling will also occur in March.

I encourage each member of our diverse SUNY Poly family to attend these You Belong at SUNY Poly events to further build an uplifting culture in which everyone is included, accepted, and valued.

Sincerely,

Dr. Grace Wang  
Interim President  
SUNY Polytechnic Institute